



Preparedness for climate change among local health department officials in New York state: A comparison with national survey results

Author(s): Carr JL, Sheffield PE, Kinney PL
Year: 2012
Journal: Journal of Public Health Management and Practice : Jphmp. 18 (2): E24-32

Abstract:

CONTEXT: Climate-change adaptation strategies that address locally specific climate hazards are critical for preventing negative health outcomes, and local public health care officials are key foci for adaptation planning. **OBJECTIVE:** To assess New York State Local Health Department officials' perceptions and preparedness related to climate-sensitive health areas, and compare these with a national sample. **DESIGN:** Online survey instrument, originally used in a national survey of local health department (LHD) officials. **SETTING:** New York State. **PARTICIPANTS:** Eligible participants included all New York State city and county LHD officials, 1 respondent per LHD. **MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES:** LHD officials' perceptions of (1) local climate-related public health effects, (2) preparation status and programming areas of LHDs, and (3) necessary resources to better address climate-related health risks. **RESULTS:** : Survey participants, representing a 54% response rate (with 93% of respondents completing more than 90% of the questions), perceived climate change as relevant to public health, and most noted that some of their existing programs already use or are planning to use climate adaptation strategies. Overall, fewer New York State respondents identified concerns or related expertise compared with the previous national survey. Many respondents expressed uncertainty regarding necessary additional resources. **CONCLUSIONS:** This type of assessment makes clear the high variability in perceived impacts and capacity at the level of LHD jurisdictions, and underscores the importance of sustained support for local climate-change preparedness programming. The implications of these findings are germane to other states with similar decentralized jurisdiction of public health. Findings from such surveys can bolster existing LHD programs, as well as inform long-term and emergency planning for climate change.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/PHH.0b013e31823dea74>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation, Mitigation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion, Research Article

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified